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The weekly forum dedicated to helping you better understand your government

This week's question: **“What do I do if I don't agree with the Assessor's value?”**

You were all excited about finally being able to afford and build your own home. Now it's done and you're enjoying the fruits of your labor – great news! Unfortunately, the bad news is that the new home, newly finished addition or new deck will all be taxed!

The Assessor is required to produce a **“Tentative”** roll” which includes all the new values for the upcoming year. Before these values become final and are used to determine your taxes, you're notified of the new values and given a chance to discuss them. There are two ways to do this.

1. Meet informally with the Assessor prior to Grievance Day to come to some sort of agreement.
2. Meet formally with the Board of Assessment Review on Grievance Day.

Before you do either of these, there are a few things you must know. The new assessment value you are given will NOT include any construction/demolition after **March 1st of that year**. That means that the new value may NOT be the total increase you will see ultimately. If your project was only 50% complete on March 1st, the increase in assessment will only include a 50% increase in value. Unfortunately, the notice you are sent by the state, will not list the percentage. Not only is it your right to know that information, but it is also something that can be argued on Grievance Day. We have posted the list of “percentages” on our website.

Not only can you dispute your assessment, you can also challenge a decision made regarding exemptions. If your application was **submitted on time**, but the Assessor has denied your exemption and you feel you're eligible for it, you can bring this to the Board of Assessment Review for review.

New York State has passed a new law, requiring every town with a website to publish the Tentative Roll on their website. Here you will find every property located in our town/village. It includes the owner and mailing address, property location, the assessment, all exemptions and special district charges, land size, and the most current deed references. This information can be helpful when collecting information for your meeting with the Board of Assessment Review. Next week we will give you all the information you need to help you when preparing for the Board of Assessment Review on Grievance Day. **(May 24, 2011)**

Next Weeks's Question: **“What are the do's and dont's of Grievance Day?”**

Articles are archived on our website www.erie.gov/newstead. Please submit questions to aac@townofnewstead.com